

LETTERS

Electioneering at the polls

I would like to voice a strong protest against the procedure of the Council of the American Physical Society in presenting its statement on the "Schwartz amendment" in the same letter as the ballot itself. This is "electioneering at the polls" in the worst way. If the council felt so strongly about the responsibility of having its views known, the same medium was available to its opinions as was used so freely by the other members of the APS, namely *PHYSICS TODAY*. At best the council's decision shows a poor judgment of human nature; a physicist might be just ornery enough to vote against the establishment if that establishment abuses its power.

I would suggest that the present balloting be declared void and that a new unprejudiced vote on the Schwartz amendment be taken. Perhaps it is also necessary to have an amendment preventing the enclosure of opinion-expressing material with APS ballots.

PETER E. SCHMIDT
University of California, Berkeley

I hope that your forthcoming "Letters" department will express the regrets of those of us who wish that the American Physical Society "establishment" had not been quite so flagrant in including their last-minute denunciation of the pending APS constitutional amendment[†] in the ballot mailing where there remains no recourse for rebuttal. I would hope that in the future, regardless of the outcome of this vote, the society will adhere to that section of the amendment that reads, "The executive secretary *shall* prepare and distribute along with the ballots a summary of the arguments *pro and con*."

PETER W. MONTGOMERY
Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company

Inclusion of this piece of paper with the ballot and associated documents is outrageous! The columns of *PHYSICS TODAY* have been as open to the council as to other members, and if the council has an opinion to express, it should express it in the same forum as

the membership and should support its position.

We, among whom are supporters and opponents of the amendment, urge that the vote on the section-6 amendment conducted by this mailing be declared invalid on the grounds of improper procedure. A new ballot should be mailed out not earlier than 15 Sept. and not later than 1 Oct., as this is the earliest period when most academic physicists can be reached again.

THOMAS M. DONAHUE, RICHARD H. PRATT, PHILIP STEHLE, JURG X. SALADIN, JOHN R. TOWNSEND, ALLEN I. JANIS, NORMAN AUSTERN, IRVING J. LOWE, EZRA T. NEWMAN

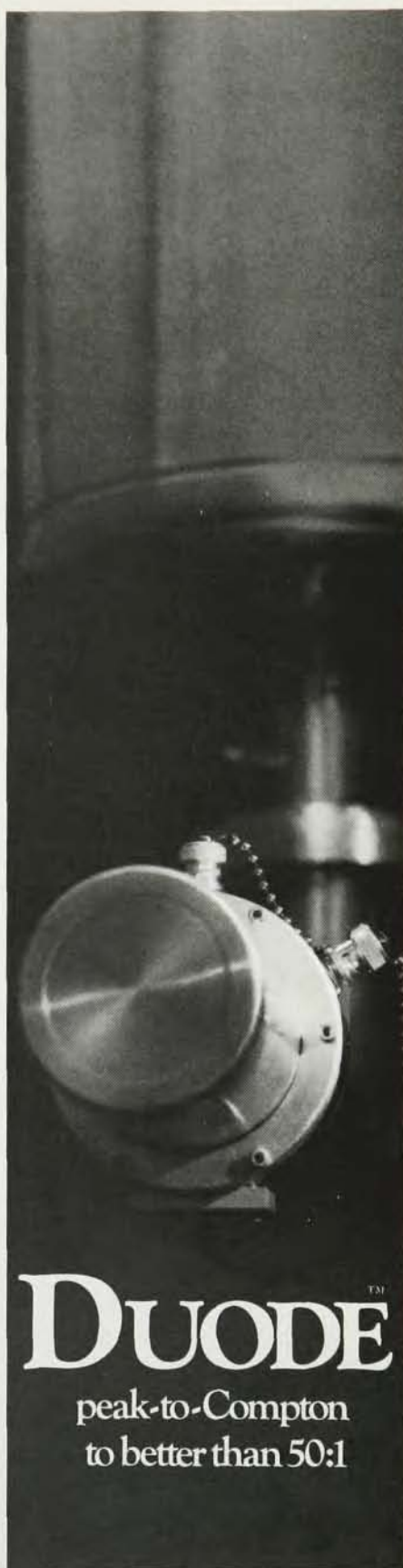
University of Pittsburgh

APS Council position

There have been several letters of protest concerning the "Statement by the Council of the American Physical Society" on the "Schwartz amendment" which was distributed in the same envelope as the ballot. These letters have been addressed to the officers and members of the Council of the American Physical Society and to *PHYSICS TODAY*. In view of these letters it appears desirable to review briefly the actions of the council.

Since this was the first time that a proposed amendment to the constitution had been introduced by petition of 1% of the membership, there were no guidelines to follow. Unresolved were questions of principle as to what role the council should take in regard to amendments introduced in this manner. Experience gained in the present case, some of it positive and some indicating possible pitfalls to be avoided, may be useful if similar cases arise in the future.

The amendment was introduced by Charles Schwartz and others in late July, 1967, when Charles H. Townes was president of the society. Procedures to be followed were discussed at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council on 11 Sept. In the meantime, background information had been circulated by mail and an opinion had been obtained from legal counsel as to whether the proposed amendment was consistent with the



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